

March 5, 2008

Bureau of Land Management Human Capital Strategy for Concessions Management

Background

In response to rapidly increasing demand by citizens for recreation infrastructure and opportunities – especially in the western U.S. – and a desire to utilize sound public-sector business practices, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is seeking opportunities to involve the private sector in providing certain recreation programs and services on the public lands. One approach is the use of concessions leases to authorize the private sector to provide appropriate recreational visitor services on the public lands which require the development and maintenance of real property.

This strategy seeks to strengthen and sustain these concessions lease efforts. It sets forth how the BLM will carry out the agency's recreation concession goals by providing the necessary staff with the skills and abilities to work cooperatively with other land management agencies and/or private contractors to successfully manage the agency's concession program, commensurate with the size of individual programs.

The BLM's Recreation and Visitor Services Division (WO 250) currently uses existing staff to provide recreation concessions program support for the entire agency. As the agency's concessions program continues to grow, state or field office staff will need to provide this program support. Each State, therefore, is responsible for evaluating and determining whether recreation concessions activities will be performed by collateral duty employees or by full-time concession management specialists.

Current Concessions Program Support

The BLM's current concession management workforce is limited to one GS-12 Lead Concession Management Specialist providing bureau-wide program support as a Subject Matter Expert (25% time on national work and 75% local) to the Recreation and Visitor Services Division (WO 250); one GS-11 Concession Management Specialist; and a Term GS-7 Concession Assistant (50% program related duties) located in field offices.

Concession-like activities in other locations are primarily coordinated as a collateral duty by lands and recreation staffs.

Short-Term Concessions Program Staffing/Skills Goals

In the short-term the BLM will:

- Continue its cooperative relationship with other DOI bureaus and use existing training resources to accomplish the concessions program goals of the agency.
- Develop a concessions program “toolbox” kit that managers and collateral duty employees can use in response to the specialized nature of the concessions program and the limited BLM-wide application. Rollout of the “toolbox” will be accomplished in coordination with the BLM National Training Center (NTC).
- Continue using a Subject Matter Expert by the Recreation and Visitor Services Division (WO 250) to ensure that a high-level of expertise is available to provide concessions program support on a bureau-wide basis.

Long-Term Concessions Program Staffing/Skills Goals

In the long-term the BLM will:

- Develop a concessions management training program through the NTC, by coordinating with a consultant, or educational institution to provide training for collateral duty personnel and managers.
- Ensure that full-time concessions management staff receive appropriate program certifications.

Concessions Program Recruitment

Recruitment of individuals to fill vacant full-time concessions-related positions in field offices is likely to continue using existing partnerships with local schools with hospitality programs. Additionally, vacancy announcements will be widely disseminated through USA Jobs, as well as other appropriate venues so that employees in other agencies with concessions management responsibilities, experience, training and education are made aware of the vacancies.

Conclusion

The BLM’s Human Capital Strategy for Concessions Management is a pro-active approach for developing and managing the staffing and skills needed as the agency’s concessions management program grows. It presents opportunities to use both existing staff expertise (full-time or collateral-duty), as well to conduct recruitment of the staffing

and skills necessary for the future of the program. It will also enable the BLM to better fulfill its recreation mission through the use of concession facilities to provide a broad range of developed recreational opportunities and experiences.